



Estimates Committee G

2007

Report No 1 to the Legislative Assembly

Introduction

On 23 May 2007 and in accordance with Standing Order 167(3), the Legislative Assembly appointed Estimates Committee G and ordered the committee to investigate and report on the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2007 (Qld).¹

Estimates Committee G provided the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly with twenty questions on notice and received responses to these questions.

On 19 July 2007, the committee conducted a public hearing to take oral evidence from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. A verbatim transcript of the committee's hearing can be accessed at:

<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Hansard/>

The committee considered the estimates referred to it by using information contained in:

- Budget papers;
- answers to pre-hearing questions on notice;
- oral evidence taken at the hearing;
- answers to questions taken on notice at the hearing; and
- additional information given in relation to answers.

This report identifies the estimates referred to the committee and the matters considered by the committee. The report states that the committee recommends expenditures regarding the Legislative Assembly be agreed to.

A volume of additional information provided with the report contains the answers to questions on notice received from the Speaker prior to the hearing and after the hearing, together with the minutes of the meetings of Estimates Committee G.

Overview

The Legislative Assembly of Queensland consists of 89 Members whose legislative responsibilities include participation in parliamentary matters such as the enactment of legislation, privileged debate on Government policy and serving on parliamentary committees. The Parliamentary Service provides administrative and support services to the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

The following table sets out details of the appropriation for 2007-08 compared to the previous financial year.²

	2006-07 \$'000	2007-08 \$'000
Departmental Outputs	61,542	65,230
Equity Adjustment	3,365	960
Vote Total	58,177	64,270

The Parliament delivers a single output called *Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service*. The estimated expenditure for 2007-08 is \$65,230M (2006-07: \$61,542M) and this will be predominantly funded by the output appropriation.³

Key elements in the 2007-08 Budget include:

- the establishment of a dedicated Community Engagement unit to coordinate and refocus existing community engagement, education and communications activities and develop new initiatives to support the Parliament and its Members to engage with the community, particularly Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, young people and regional Queenslanders;
- refurbishing existing kitchen facilities in the Parliamentary Annexe to provide a physical environment reflecting contemporary best practice in workplace safety and hygiene obligations;

As the committee was required to report on other portfolios, in accordance with Standing Order 186(2), the committee is reporting separately on the proposed expenditures for the Legislative Assembly.

² Speaker's Ministerial Portfolio Statement 2007-08, page 4

³ Estimated Actual for 2006-07, Speaker's Portfolio Statements 2007-08, page 4.

- upgrading existing electorate office equipment to cater for the changing business demands of Members and improve engagement with constituents;
- the development of a tabled papers database, which will hold all tabled papers from 1997 and be accessible electronically to all Queenslanders via the internet;
- the continuation of existing strategies and exploration of innovative approaches to further promote water and energy conservation within the Parliamentary precinct; and
- the final implementation (subject to the approval of the Legislative Assembly) of a project to deliver a single official record of parliamentary proceedings and debates through the integration of *Hansard* and the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Issues canvassed at the hearing included:

- the adequacy of lifts servicing the Parliamentary Annexe;
- enhancement of information technology services provided to Members;
- employment on a casual basis by the Parliamentary Service and security and other screening of casual employees;
- water preservation and any rainwater harvesting within the parliamentary precinct;
- whether school-based traineeships might be conducted at Parliamentary House;
- a program to upgrade level seven of the Parliamentary Annexe, including new signage, emergency lighting, handrails and barbecue facilities;
- the video broadcast of proceedings of the Queensland Parliament;
- plans for the development of a tabled papers database;
- implementation of a One Record project to integrate the *Votes and Proceedings* and *Hansard* as a single document called the *Record of Proceedings*;
- training of electorate office staff;
- staffing levels within the Parliamentary Service;
- activities to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum regarding removal of two references in the Australian Constitution that discriminated against Aboriginal people; and
- internal control improvements regarding stock control.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the *Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2005*, be agreed to without amendment.

Mr Evan Moorhead MP

Chair

August 2007

Committee Members

Mr Evan Moorhead MP (Chair)
 Mr Mike Horan MP (Deputy Chair)
 Mrs Liz Cunningham MP
 Hon Ken Hayward MP
 Mr Peter Lawlor MP
 Hon Kevin Lingard MP
 Mrs Jo-Ann Miller MP

Secretariat

Mrs Julie Copley (Research Director)
 Ms Amanda Honeyman (Research Officer)
 Ms Michelle Benham (Executive Assistant)